



The Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met at Veterans Park Indoor Pavilion, located at 2136 Central Avenue, Charlotte, NC 28205 at 6 p.m.

## **PRC MINUTES**

### **March 12, 2019**

#### **ATTENDANCE**

**PRC Present:** Heidi Pruess, Chair  
Rick Winiker, Vice-Chair  
Peter Engels, Executive Secretary  
Sterling Martin  
Brian Cox  
Blanche Penn  
Doug Burnett  
Paul Freestone  
Ann Harrison  
Rufus Kearney  
Sandy Barnett  
Mark Loflin

**Guest:** Commissioner Mark Jerrell

**PRC Absent:** Central 1 - Vacant

#### **Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Chair, Heidi Pruess, which was followed by the pledge of allegiance.

#### **Welcome and Introductions:**

Chair, Heidi Pruess, welcomed all to the March 12, 2016 Park and Recreation Commission

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meeting. Commissioners and staff introduced themselves.

**New PRC Introductions:** Mark Loflin, South Region 2 and Sandy Barnett, Southern Towns

### **Public Appearance – Special Presentations**

**Matt Hornberger – Skate Board Interest:** Mr. Hornberger appeared before the Park and Recreation Commission to ask for more support in terms of facilities for the skateboarding community in Charlotte. Mr. Hornberger stated that he would like to be included on conversations regarding skating boarding in the new Master Plan.

**Dave Molinaro – Mason Wallace Park:** Mr. Molinaro appeared before the Park and Recreation Commission, representing the Mason Wallace Advocates. This group is made up of residents of Burtonwood, McClintock Woods and Woodberry Forest neighborhoods and East Meck High School. A handout was provided to show the improvements made by the advocates and an improvement proposal to Park and Recreation. The handout also included notes of interest. This handout can be viewed here: [Mason Wallace Park Advocates](#). Mr. Molinaro asked for a commitment from Director Jones to meet with City, County and Business players to discuss the proposed improvements and projects to Mason Wallace Park. Director Jones agreed to meet with Mr. Molinaro to discuss and come up with a strategy.

**Apryl Lewis and Shawn Richardson – Lake Arbor Community and Police Activities League (PAL):** Ms. Lewis and Mr. Richardson have been working with Commissioner Penn to improve the Lake Arbor Community. Ms. Lewis came before the Park and Recreation Commission seeking direction on building a partnership with the Department to assist with programing and mentoring for the youth in the Lake Arbor Community. Apryl is the lead organizer of developing partnerships within the community. She shared that Al Carter of the Tuckaseegee Recreation Center has been instrumental in providing space for meetings and making the center accessible for the residents of Lake Arbor, mainly the youth. Ms. Lewis's goal is to increase positive programs for the youth in this at-risk neighborhood and to provide caring mentoring relationships.

Mr. Richardson shared the community's efforts to partner with CMPD to bring PAL to the community to provide youth athletics. They have learned that PAL is not a CMPD organization, but an organization funded by local businesses. Currently undergoing a restructuring process, PAL is working on their programming, but are not currently serving in the West Charlotte area. (See below the history, mission and vision and reach of PAL taken from their website)

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#### OUR HISTORY

The Police Athletic League of Charlotte was organized in 1968 with the formation of four baseball (PAL) funded by local businesses and the Queen City Optimist Club. Grants from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration and the City of Charlotte helped PAL expand its programming.

PAL has since diversified its programming to include academic and enrichment activities becoming the well-rounded youth organization it is today.

#### OUR MISSION & VISION

Our mission is to provide opportunities for the youth of our community that foster their Leadership and Citizenship Skills through Academics, Dedication, Enrichment, and Athletics.

Our Vision is for our members and their families to obtain access and opportunities to people, programs, and initiative that create lifestyle advances.

#### OUR REACH

We aim to reach as much of Mecklenburg County as we possibly can. In our first stage of expansion our plan is to ensure that we are within the communities that need us the most. Currently, that includes the Greenville, and Hidden Valley neighborhoods for both after school, and summer camp.

The Bette Rae / Tuckaseegee community site for summer camp and the 2018 - 2019 CMS School year.

Commissioner Burnett asked if the fees charged by the Park and Recreation Department was a barrier for any of the children from Lake Arbor. Ms. Lewis said in some cases, but not for everyone. She felt that quality was more important and that no fees would mean less quality.

Terri Stowers, Division Director of Community and Recreation Center Services shared the following information on some of the Departments efforts:

- PAL operates out of the Greenville Center and does an afterschool program and summer camp at Bette Rae Thomas Recreation Center.
- We have a contract with the Bethlehem Center to run afterschool programs and summer camps.
- The centers will be having "Safe Play" sites; a place for kids to come for activities and will include breakfast and lunch.
- At the request of the County Manager, the Department has put in a request for the past two years to have basketball opportunities late in the evening at Tuckaseegee, West Charlotte, Albemarle Road and Naomi Drenan, but has not been funded, mainly due to the cost of off duty police. Commissioner Mark Jerrell asked what the cost would be for the program.
- CMPD has been at Albemarle Road doing "Vision Boards" with the youth.

#### **Awards and Recognition:**

**Coach Al Simpson:** Director Jones and Brenden Cunliffe recognized the retirement of Coach Al Simpson and presented him with a retirement award. Coach Simpson, a Recreation Specialist at Revolution Park Sports Academy, is a 24-year veteran of the US Army and shared an extensive background in boxing with the Department. He is retiring with 20 years of service.

**James Alsop:** Director Jones and Greg Clemmer recognized the retirement of James Alsop and presented him with a retirement award. James was instrumental in bringing the First Tee of Charlotte to the Department and instituting the Sports Wall of Fame. He is retiring with 20 years of service.

#### **Standing AC Reports and Appointments**

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Standing advisory council reports were deferred to the April 9, 2019 PRC meeting. Chair Pruess reminded everyone to turn in their AC priority reports for inclusion in the agenda packets.

**North Advisory Council Appointment:** **Motion was made** by Commissioner Penn to appoint **David Reynolds** to an unexpired term on the North Advisory Council, expiring 6/2019, which was seconded by Commissioner Martin and approved unanimously.

### **PRC Chair Report**

**Special PRC Meeting Debrief of February 22, 2019:** Chair Pruess, with Commissioners Burnett, Loflin and Winker present; made a presentation to the BOCC Environment Stewardship Committee which included a revised FY20 Budget Priority Recommendations PPT presentation and a Statement of Urgent Park System Needs and Resolution on Immediate and Aggressive Priority Needs and Funding. These documents can be viewed here:

- [Revised FY20 Budget Priority Recommendations](#)
- [Statement of Urgent Park System Needs and Resolution on Immediate and Aggressive Priority Needs and Funding](#)

The committee asked that the PRC bring the presentation to the full BOCC so that a motion can be made for PRC to investigate the financing options included in the presentation. The BOCC also asked that the PRC work on the marketing message.

The following resulted from discussion:

- Commissioner Harden attended the Environmental Stewardship Committee meeting and shared the concept of an economic improvement program which could have the potential for a small business to compete for contracts on park projects.
- Important for PRC to be visible and to share the “why” regarding Park and Recreation projects and programs.
- Educate the public on park amenities.
- PRC approved to move forward with a \$100 million-dollar land acquisition ask. The ask is for the money to be found now and would not be related to BOCC discussions about the potential for a bond referendum for land acquisition.
- A new Park and Recreation Master Plan will show the needs for long-term goals.
- Kerry Garner, Marketing Coordinator, will attend the April PRC meeting to share the 2019 Marketing Proposal. Currently, the Park and Rec website is the main marketing source.
- Board of County Commissioner, Mark Jerrell, was present and thanked the PRC for their updated presentation to the BOCC Environmental Stewardship Committee. Commissioner Jerrell shared that racial equity was at the top of the list at the BOCC annual retreat. It is important to keep this in mind as park and land acquisition needs are shared with the public so that everyone understands, and no one feels isolated.
- When the PRC bring their presentation back to the full BOCC, it will include a piece around the cost/value of parks, park amenities and land acquisition.
- Besides the data piece of marketing, the “stories” are critical for getting the message of

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PRC's advisement and advocacy across to the residents of Mecklenburg County. Chair Pruess ask that all the board members begin to share their stories, especially as they relate to stories in the gap areas.

## **Director's Report**

**Fees and Charges Overview – Terri Stowers:** Terry shared upcoming changes to the fees and charges which will go before the BOCC for approval and to be effective July 1, 2019:

- Fees were consolidated and simplified:
  - Membership Passes
  - Daily Admission
  - Birthday Party Packages
  - Multi-Booking Discount: Sportsplex
- Eliminate Annual Passes and Ray Pass.
- Aquatic Pass becomes “MeckPass”
  - Includes entrance to all fee-based facilities.
- Daily admission fees will be increased, and guest passes will be an option for membership holders. Outdoor pool admission fees will be increased.
- Cost of birthday party packages will be increased.
- A 10% discount will be given to multi-bookings at the Sportsplex in Matthews.
- Eliminate community garden fees.
- All current fees can be found on the website: [parkandrec.com](http://parkandrec.com)

Concerns were expressed regarding free use of facilities by HOAs. The PRC would like to understand the **fee waiver policy**. This policy will be included in the next agenda packet under the Director's Report. The following was shared by staff:

- An HOA or neighborhood associated representing the service area of the recreation center can use space for a meeting once a month for free.
- Government agencies can use recreation center space for public meetings.
- Meck. Co. departments can use recreation center space for internal meetings, Monday through Thursday.
- Non-profits receive a 50% reduction.
- For recreation centers, less that 10% of the revenue goals come from rentals as recreation centers are more about programming than rentals.

PRC would also like to understand:

- How much of the Park and Recreation budget is dependent on fees?
- Those receiving a waiver vs those paying.
- Revenue goals.
- Understand cost recovery requirements.

The PRC also expressed concerns around programming fees and if those are a barrier to

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participation. They would like to understand the process for determining a fee. Terri Stowers will address this at the April 9, 2019 PRC Meeting. Discussion resulted in the following:

- The PRC would like to understand program fees and the process for determining a fee. Terri Stowers will address this at the April 9, 2019 PRC meeting.
- The Department now has the mechanism in place to accept donations at our recreation centers.
- The Department does have some program scholarship funds. Eligibility is based on currently having any type of government assistance.
- Free swim lessons continue to be offered.
- Spray grounds are free.
- 85% of programming for seniors is free.
- Interest in the Department developing a fee waiver policy for programming and a method to market the policy should it be developed.
- Interest in knowing the cost to the County to reduce or waive programming fees for those at or below poverty where cost would otherwise be a barrier.

**Motion was made** by Commissioner Winiker for staff to provide the policy for waiving fees for access to facilities and programming and how a person qualifies, which was seconded by Commissioner Burnett and approved unanimously.

**Sponsorship:** PRC were asked to review the information provided and defer discussion to the April 9 PRC meeting.

The PRC asked for a copy of the Department's budget presentation and ONA for FY20. Director Jones will provide.

### **Consent**

**Motion was made** by Commissioner Winiker to approve all consent items, including the PRC minutes of January 8, 2019, which was seconded by Commissioner Burnett and approved unanimously.

### **PRC Reports and Requests**

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

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